

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

### GOALS:

- Provide a high quality residential environment in La Jolla that respects its relationship to the sea, to hillsides and to open space.
- Promote the development of a variety of housing types and styles in La Jolla.
- Introduce opportunities for the production of more affordable housing within La Jolla to meet the housing needs of all income levels.
- Maintain the character of La Jolla's residential areas by ensuring that redevelopment occurs in a manner that protects natural features, preserves existing streetscape themes and allows a harmonious visual relationship to exist between the bulk and scale of new and older structures.

### BACKGROUND

La Jolla, firmly established as a residential community, is virtually a built-out community with over 15,025 total housing units. Of this total, approximately 71 percent or 10,733 are single dwelling units and 29 percent or 4,286 are multiple dwelling units (SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates for January 1, 2000).

There are very few vacant parcels remaining in La Jolla where construction of single-family homes can occur. All of the available vacant parcels are isolated single lots that are expected to develop at the density permitted by the existing zone.

Based on the future development of these single dwelling unit lots and on the present residential zoning designations in the community, La Jolla can anticipate having a total of approximately 15,228 dwelling units by the year 2020 (SANDAG 2020 Cities/County Forecast).

Prior to the adoption of Proposition D in 1972 and the La Jolla Planned District Ordinance in 1988, multiple dwelling unit development in La Jolla was built to accommodate a range of densities, some much higher than 45 dwelling

units per acre, which is the highest residential designation in this plan. Many of these higher density structures were built on or near major streets, such as North Torrey Pines Road and Prospect Street, or along transit corridors, such as La Jolla Boulevard.

The bulk and scale of these high-rise multiple dwelling units, such as 939 Coast Boulevard and The Seville, created adverse impacts on the overall character of the community as well as providing an increased level of traffic on major streets and a deterioration of the visual quality of the community.

However, since the adoption of both Proposition D, which established a 30-foot height limit, and the La Jolla Planned District Ordinance, which set development standards for residential and commercial projects within specific zones of La Jolla, the scale of more recent multiple dwelling unit construction is more in harmony with the traditional themes of the community. The use of facade articulation, the placement of driveways underground or along the alleyway for vehicular access rather than from the street, as well as landscaping of interior yards, has helped to make multiple dwelling unit development more consistent

with the character of La Jolla. The definition of height, changed in 2000, should also help to reinforce community themes regarding the bulk and scale of multiple dwelling unit development. The Residential Land Use Element of this plan addresses the following issues: Community Character, Development Near Coastal Bluffs, Seismic Risk Areas and Balanced Communities.

### **Community Character**

Single dwelling unit residential development in La Jolla covers a spectrum of densities and architectural styles and expressions. One of the more critical issues associated with single dwelling unit development is the relationship between the bulk and scale of infill development to existing single dwelling units. New construction of single dwelling unit homes have tended to be larger in size than the traditional development in some neighborhoods.

In La Jolla Shores, bulk and scale for single dwelling unit and multiple dwelling unit redevelopment has been subject to the La Jolla Shores Planned District Ordinance which was adopted by City Council in 1974. The La Jolla Shores Planned District Ordinance addresses the use, and density of structures that are located within the boundary of the La Jolla Shores Planned District Area.

In some areas of La Jolla, certain features that contribute to community character are quite evident. However, in many areas, residential diversity is emphasized more than a uniform theme or development pattern.

A 2002 historic survey will identify individual structures that are potentially eligible for historic designation, and may identify certain areas as historic districts.

Common development patterns or streetscape themes that reoccur within the public domain or right-of-way of a particular block or occur throughout the entire neighborhood can be identified. These features help to contribute to a neighborhood's sense of identity and place within the community. Neighborhoods do not have static or clearly defined boundaries. Elements of character blend from one area to another, and it is this association of varying elements which create neighborhood character. Public amenities such as sidewalks, curb side vegetation, street furniture, fences or walls should be considered important elements to neighborhood character.

The plan recommendations that are contained in this element identify areas of common neighborhood themes.

### **Hillside Development**

Hillside development criteria for all development, including residential, is located in the Natural Resources and Open Space System Element. All residential projects are subject to these policies and recommendations.

### **Development Near Coastal Bluffs**

The shoreline bluffs are one of the community's most beautiful scenic resources and offer magnificent vistas of the ocean and the coastline of La Jolla. The views provided by these coastal bluffs continue to offer a tremendous incentive for residential development along the bluff top. Studies, however, have indicated that certain bluffs are susceptible to periodic erosion and are unstable. Seawalls, revetments and parapets which have been constructed in some cases to protect private homes and property may eventually become structurally unstable.

Thus, the coastal bluff regulations that are contained in the Environmentally Sensitive Lands regulations of the Land Development Code are intended to guide the placement of these seawalls, revetments, parapets and residential structures in order to prevent structural damage to existing principal structures, minimize erosion of the bluff face and maintain lateral public access along the coast.

### **Geologically Unstable Risk Areas**

*The City of San Diego Seismic Safety Study* (1995) identified areas in La Jolla where seismic activity can present risks to the stability of residential structures that are located along earthquake fault lines. The study also indicated that there are areas where a relatively high potential for landslides exists in La Jolla. Those areas are shown in Figure 5.

There are five geological fault trace lines identified in La Jolla: The Rose Canyon Fault, which parallels Ardath Road and extends through Mount Soledad; the Scripps Country Club; Muirlands; and, the Mount Soledad Faults, which all extend in a northwest to southeast direction within the central portion of the community. All of these fault lines, with the exception of the Rose Canyon Fault, were identified in the seismic safety study as having a "moderate" or "variable" risk rating and were not classified as "active" fault lines. The Rose Canyon Fault has been rated as a "high" geotechnical risk, according to the seismic safety study, indicating that significant ground failure could happen should an earthquake occur along this fault line. Due to a history of seismic movement, the seismic safety study has classified this fault and as an "active" trace line.

Where fault lines have been identified as "active", the City restricts the issuance of residential building permits within a 100-foot buffer of the fault line until a geological study

has identified the condition of the subsurface rock layers as well as the risks and constraints associated with construction within this buffer zone. This restriction would apply in the case of development along the Rose Canyon Fault.

### **Balanced Communities**

It is the policy of the City of San Diego to promote economically and racially balanced communities. As of the 1990 Census, La Jolla was not considered a balanced community. Very high property values in La Jolla have precluded private construction of low or moderate income housing. In order to provide opportunities for affordable housing in communities such as La Jolla, the FY1999-FY2004 Housing Element of the General Plan recommends policies and programs to address the issue of balanced community housing assistance needs of low and moderate income families, the City will develop and adopt appropriate policies and programs so that all communities contribute toward meeting of the City's housing goals.

According to SANDAG's 2020 Regional Growth Forecast, La Jolla has approximately 3,500 retail trade jobs. Most of these jobs are low paying. The occupants of these jobs should have an opportunity to live in the community in which they work because they contribute to the quality of life in La Jolla by helping to provide a necessary service and, by living in proximity to work, these low-wage workers can contribute toward reducing traffic congestion and the improvement of regional air quality. Given that La Jolla has a significant number of retail job opportunities, an increase in residential density for affordable housing is desirable in order to provide an opportunity for these employees to live in the same community in which they work.

Assistance towards this goal may include, but is not limited to, new construction, acquisition

of existing housing units for conversion to low income occupancy, rental assistance programs and a variety of regulatory tools and incentives. Initial strategies to meet the housing assistance needs for La Jolla are listed under the Plan Recommendations of this element.

## **POLICIES**

### **1. Designation of Residential Densities**

Maintain the existing residential character of La Jolla's neighborhoods by encouraging buildout of residential areas at the plan density.

### **2. Community Character**

In order to promote development compatible with the existing residential scale:

- a. The City should apply the development recommendations that are contained in this plan to all properties in La Jolla in order avoid extreme and intrusive changes to the residential scale of La Jolla's neighborhoods and to promote good design and harmony within the visual relationships and transitions between new and older structures.
- b. The City should ensure that new residential development within La Jolla complies with the landscape and streetscape guidelines that are identified in this element and in Appendix E of this plan.
- c. The City should ensure that residential development within La Jolla complies with the landscape and streetscape recommendations that are identified in this element as well as the policies and recommendations contained within the Visual Resources section of the Natural Resources and Open Space System Element of this plan.

### **3. Development Near Coastal Bluffs**

- a. The City should ensure that residential projects along the coastal bluff maintain sideyard setbacks as established by the underlying zone and other applicable regulations in the Land Development Code in order to form view corridors and to prevent a walled-off appearance from the street to the ocean.
- b. The City should ensure that bluff stability is a foremost consideration in site design. New development on or near the coastal bluff will be designed in a manner that will protect the bluff from erosion.

### **4. Geologically Unstable Areas**

The City should require that all residential structures proposed in specific geologic hazard zones as identified on the geologic hazard maps referenced by the Seismic Safety Element of the *City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan* provide a geological reconnaissance report. All geological studies should be prepared in accordance with the City's *Technical Guidelines for Geotechnical Reports* manual which is located in the Development Services department.

### **5. Balanced Communities**

- a. The City should promote opportunities for the development of affordable housing by allowing a density bonus, provided that this extra density be allowed only for projects certified by the Housing Commission. To qualify, a portion of the additional units would need to be restricted as affordable housing to "low-income," or "very low-income" persons under applicable state statutory standards for the affordable housing density bonus and implementing City regulations.



- b. The City should pursue replacement of demolished affordable housing units within the community in order to maintain affordable housing units that exist in La Jolla, consistent with the locational priorities stated in the Coastal Overlay Zone Affordable Housing Replacement regulations.
- c. The City should encourage the use of affordable housing programs administered by the Housing Commission to promote the development of affordable housing. These programs include both land use and financial incentives.
- d. The City should seek to locate higher density housing principally along transit corridors and in proximity to emerging lower income employment opportunities.
- e. The City should provide incentives for mixed use development which include housing, retail, and office uses at transit nodes and other high intensity location as appropriate.
- f. The City should develop a variety of regulatory tools and incentives to encourage the retention and use of designated historic resources for affordable housing.






## **6. Visual Resources and Public Access**

- a. All development and redevelopment projects should be subject to the policies and recommendations outlined under the Visual Resources, Coastal Bluffs, and Public and Shoreline Access Sections of the Natural Resources and Open Space System Element.
- b. All unauthorized encroachments into the public right-of-way should be removed or an Encroachment Removal Agreement (ERA) should be obtained.
- c. The City should analyze for visual impact and ensure public review and comment for any telecommunications structures proposed to be located in residential areas. Regarding the proposed placement of cellular facilities in these areas, the Citywide Telecommunications Policy should be adhered to.

## **7. Energy Efficiency**

The City should encourage and promote energy efficient building design/orientation as well as appliances and technology.

**Legend**

-  Very Low Density Residential (0-5 DU/AC)
-  Low Density Residential (5-9 DU/AC)
-  Low Medium Residential (9-15 DU/AC)
-  Medium Residential (15-30 DU/AC)
-  Medium High Residential (30-45 DU/AC)



**Residential Densities**



**La Jolla Community Plan**  
City of San Diego · Planning Department

**DRAFT**



Figure 16

## ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION	ADOPT WITH PLAN	TIMING		RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	SEE FOR MORE DETAILS
		WITHIN 5 YEARS	WITHIN 20 YEARS			
Rezone portions of the West Muirlands single dwelling unit areas from RS-1-5 TO RS-1-4 and other areas as applicable.	•			Planning Department Planning Commission City Council	City	Policy 1
Require that new projects developed under discretionary review comply with the landscape and streetscape guidelines identified in this plan.		On-going		Development Services Department	Cost Recoverable Appendix E	Policy 2
Implement the ESL regulations, Sensitive Coastal Overlay Zones and other Coastal Zone requirements of this plan, during permit project review.		On-going		Development Services Department	Cost Recoverable	Policies 2, 3, 4, 6 Recommendations 2, 3, 4 & 6
Designate as low density residential the City-owned designated open space parcel at the intersection of La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla Scenic Way, and La Jolla Scenic Drive North.	•			Planning Department Planning Commission City Council	City	Policies 1 & 2
Designate the five center properties on the north side of Cave Street (to the alley) between Ivanhoe St and Prospect Street Medium Density Residential. Rezone the easternmost of these properties from Zone 1 (PDO) to RM-3-7.	•			Planning Department Planning Commission City Council	City	Policy 1
Update PDOs to implement community character recommendations.			•	Development Services Department Planning Department	City, Grant	Policies 2a-c Recommendations 2a-f

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Residential Densities

The plan has assigned a variety of residential densities throughout the community. Ensure that proposed new development is constructed withing the density range identified for the project site on the Residential Densities map and as described below.

**Very Low Density:** 0-5 dwelling units per net residential acre (excluding right-of-way and utility easements). This density range is characterized by large, single dwelling unit, estate homes built on 10,000 to 40,000 square-foot parcels with steep slopes and/or open space areas. This type of development is appropriate for the bluff top areas of La Jolla Farms, the Muirlands and portions of the Planned Residential Development areas of La Jolla Alta along Mount Soledad Road. The RS-1-4, RS-1-2 and the RS-1-1 zones implement this designation.

In order to preserve the existing bulk, scale and existing development pattern of single dwelling unit homes in the southeast corner of West Muirlands Drive and Nautilus Street of the Muirlands area, rezone approximately 8 acres from RS-1-5 to RS-1-4 which is consistent with the average lot size in this neighborhood of 14,000 square feet.

**Low Density:** 5-9 dwelling units per net residential acre. This range is characterized by single dwelling unit residential homes on 5,000 - 7,000 square foot lots.

Approximately 20 percent of the community planning area is developed through this category which is implemented through the RS-1-7 zone.

**Low-medium Density:** 9-15 dwelling units per net residential acre. This low-medium

density range will allow for multiple dwelling unit development in the form of townhomes and low-scale apartments that are found in portions of the Windansea area. The RM-1-1 zone is proposed to implement this designation.

**Medium Density:** 15-30 dwelling units per net residential acre. This density range is characterized by medium density condominiums and apartments and is implemented through the RM-2-5 zone.

Increased density in Zone 5 of the La Jolla Planned District Ordinance (PDO): Residential development or redevelopment in Zone 5, normally limited to 30 dwelling units per acre, may be allowed up to a maximum of 45 dwelling units per acre if all applicable Special Use Permit requirements of Section 103.1208 of the La Jolla PDO are complied with.

**Medium High Density:** 30-45 dwelling units per net residential acre. This density is characterized by higher density condominiums and apartments and is implemented through the RM-3-7 zone.

### 2. Community Character

- a. In order to maintain and enhance the existing neighborhood character and ambiance, and to promote good design and visual harmony in the transitions between new and existing structures, preserve the following elements:

- 1) Bulk and scale - with regard to surrounding structures or land form conditions as viewed from the public right-of-way and from parks and open space;



- 2) Street landscape - with regard to size and shape or generalized type of planting materials;
  - 3) Hardscapes - with regard to pavement types, patterns or lack of patterns, colors, widths, colors and contours;
  - 4) Street fixtures - with regard to type, size and location (street light fixtures, benches, street signage);
  - 5) Site fixtures - with regard to height, type, material and location (fences, walls, retaining walls, curb cuts and driveways);
  - 6) Curbs, gutters and street pavements -with regard to types and materials; and
  - 7) Public physical and visual access as identified in Figure 9 and Appendix G.
- b. In order to regulate the scale of new development, apply development regulations to all residential properties in La Jolla that proportionally relate the building envelope to the existing lot dimensions. Apply minimum side and rear yard setback requirements that separate structures from adjacent properties in order to prevent a wall effect along the street face as viewed from the public right-of-way. Side yard setbacks should be incrementally increased for wider lots.
- c. In order to promote transitions in scale between new and older structures, create visual relief through the use of diagonal or off-setting planes, building articulation, roofline treatment and variations within front yard setback requirements.
- d. For large lots in single dwelling unit areas, apply development regulations that will limit the perceived bulk and scale differences relative to surrounding lots. Apply a sliding scale for floor area ratios that will decrease building scale as the lot size increases.
- e. In order to address transitions between the bulk and scale of new and older development in residential areas, maintain the existing 30-foot height limit of the single dwelling unit zones and Proposition D. Structures with front and side yard facades that exceed one story should slope or step back additional stories, up to the 30-foot height limit, in order to allow flexibility while maintaining the integrity of the streetscape and providing adequate amounts of light and air.
- f. Review and revise applicable Planned District Ordinance (PDO) residential regulations to implement the community character recommendations in this Plan.

### **3. Development Near Coastal Bluffs**

- a. Prohibit coastal bluff development on or beyond the bluff face, except for public stairways and ramps to provide access from the bluff top to the beach as identified in Appendix G or to maintain bluff stability. Other permitted coastal development would include fencing to deter trespassing and protect fragile resources, and erosion control measures, such as seawalls and drainage conduits, provided that such measures do not alter the natural character of the bluff face, restrict public access, or encroach on public property without an approved encroachment permit.
- b. Require a geotechnical report for all bluff top development to document

that the site is stable enough to support the proposed development.

- c. Permit the placement of shoreline protective works, such as seawalls, revetments and parapets, only when required to save coastal-dependent uses or when there are no other feasible means to protect existing principal structures, such as homes in danger of erosion from wave action, and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on shoreline sand supply.
- d. Prohibit the encroachment of protective structures into any public areas unless engineering studies indicate that minimal encroachment may be necessary to avoid significant erosion conditions and that no other viable alternative exists.
- e. Assure that new shoreline protective devices are consistent in design, materials and in color with the existing natural environment.
- f. Require indigenous, native and drought tolerant plants in all new developments and significant additions along coastal bluffs, to reduce the need for underground irrigation systems that contribute to the erosion of the bluff face due to water runoff over the bluff.
- g. Direct roof and hardscape drainage away from the bluff toward the street.
- h. Improve existing street drainage outlets with energy dissipating devices or other similar measures in order to minimize erosion caused by quantity, velocity or content of runoff.
- i. Prohibit excavation, grading, or deposit of any materials on the beach

or the face of the bluff and prohibit the use of sandy beach for the interim storage of construction materials and equipment, except for permitted shoreline protective devices.

- j. As a condition of new development, require a waiver of liability against the public and any governmental agency for liability due to damage from storm waves to real property associated with the improvement which should be recorded as a deed restriction against the property.

#### **4. Geologically Unstable Areas**

Prepare all geological studies in accordance with the City's Development Services' *Technical Guidelines for Geotechnical Reports* which require an evaluation of the site by state certified geologist and engineer to ensure the safety of development on the site.

#### **5. Balanced Communities**

In order to provide opportunities for affordable and balanced housing in La Jolla, this plan recommends the following:

- a. Support higher densities along transit corridors and adjacent to pockets of service sector employment to encourage affordable housing opportunities.
- b. Enforce and implement the Coastal Zone Affordable Housing Replacement Program to facilitate replacement of existing affordable housing units, emphasizing the primary goal of retention of existing affordable housing units on site or within La Jolla. The Program mandates the replacement of affordable housing within or nearby

the Coastal Zone when a threshold number of affordable housing units are demolished or converted to a non-residential use.

- c. Utilize the Affordable Housing Density Bonus Program to provide an opportunity for affordable housing and to help implement the Coastal Housing Replacement Program. This bonus in density is intended to materially assist the housing building industry in providing adequate and affordable shelter for all economic segments of the community.
- d. City-owned sites adjacent to the publicly-owned Fay Avenue Right-of-Way were identified in the 1980 Fay Avenue Precise Plan as affordable housing for low-to moderate-income families. The Housing Commission and Planning Department will continue to work with the community planning group to promote the development of affordable housing within this area and the community at large. The San Diego Housing Commission will continue to work with private and non-entities to provide affordable housing through the use of local housing assistance programs administered by the Commission in order to meet the affordable housing needs of La Jolla.
- e. Develop a variety of regulatory tools and incentives to encourage the retention and use of designated historic resources as affordable housing. These include, but are not limited to historic Conditional Use Permits available through the City, as well as Section 8 subsidies and write-downs available through the Housing Commission.
- f. Encourage utilization of the following regulatory tools to provide for more affordable and balanced housing on La Jolla:

- **Multifamily Bond Program:** This program provides low interest loans to property owners of multiple dwelling unit housing through the sale of bonds. In exchange for the loans, the owners would be required to rent 20 percent of the multiple dwelling unit housing units to households earning no more than 50 percent of the median area income (MAI) or 10 percent of the units to households at 50 percent MAI, with an additional 30 percent of the units at 60 percent MAI, for the longer of 15 years or the period during which the bonds are outstanding.

- **Section 8 Rental Assistance Program:** This program offers vouchers to economically disadvantaged households who use these vouchers to rent privately-owned apartments. Households who qualify for this program pay approximately 30 percent of their gross monthly income for rent, including utilities, and the Federal Government pays the balance to the property owners.

- **Senior CUP Program:** This Conditional Use Permit program provides a density bonus of up to 50 percent to property owners who agree to rent all of the units to senior citizens.

## **6. Visual Resources and Public Access**

Residential projects proposed along identified public view areas, as listed in Figure 9 and Appendix G, are subject to the Visual Resources and Public Access policies and recommendations that are contained in the Natural Resource and Open Space System Element.

## 7. Energy Efficiency

- a. For all residential projects, consider the structures site design and solar orientation in order to maximize energy efficiency.
- b. For all multi-family residential projects, make available information on energy efficient appliances and technology in its marketing materials and within its sales office.
- c. For all multi-family residential projects, either provide, or offer as an option, alternative energy technologies to be incorporated into the residences during construction. Identify the provision of, or option for, the alternative energy in the marketing materials.